**Disrupted STD lines in Manipur**

2215. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether STD lines in Manipur have been paralysed and the State is cut off from the rest of the country;

(b) whether the said situation has arisen on account of removal of a vital part from the microwave station at Maibom Lokchao by an insurgent outfit;

(c) by when and on what ground the said part was removed; and

(d) whether the missing part has been replaced and the STD lines have been restored?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) No, Sir. However, there is congestion in traffic due to failure of Imphal-Silchar digital microwave link.

(b) Yes, Sir. However, there is congestion in traffic due to failure of Imphal-Silchar digital microwave link.

(b) Yes, Sir. The situation has arisen on account of the removal of a vital part of the equipment from microwave repeater station at Oynamlong (but not a Maibom Lokchao) by some unidentified armed intruders forcibly.

(c) The said part was removed at about 10.00 Hrs. on 05.11.2002 against demand for ransom.

(d) No, Sir. However, STD service in Manipur are working through alternate media/path.

**Problems faced by I.T. professionals**

2216. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Flow of infotech workers reverses towards India" appearing in the 'Business Standard' dated the 9th September, 2002;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to address the problems which are likely to be faced by the Indian I.T. professionals in the coming years as highlighted in the news-item?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) The said news-item had appeared in the business Standard dated the 6th September, 2002 and not 9th September, 2002.

(b) Government's reaction:

(i) the impact of US Economy Slowdown/Shrinking:

— Slowdown of US economy requires US industry to shift from on-shore to off-shore contracts that are more competitive. It offers an advantage of added market to India.

— With the maturing of Indian IT software and services industry and availability of reliable data communications services, off-shore contracts are increasing and relatively less need for on-shore development.

(ii) Opportunities for workers moving to India:

The IT professional returning to India shall get employed/ engaged as follows:

— New contracts from Europe and different regions of Asia.

— Increased of-shore contracts with Indian companies.

(c) Following two initiatives are taken in order to address the problems which are likely to be faced by the Indian IT professionals in the coming years:

— Promoting new markets (other than USA) like EU, Latin America, Asian region etc.

— Making off-shore development/services more attractive and increasing confidence level of clients abroad.

In order to achieve the above, following specific steps are taken:

— Awareness programs and focused Road Shows in collaboration with the Industry, organized periodically in

potential markets other than US, such as EU, Japan, Latin America etc.

— Financial support to industry for organizing and participating in international fairs, exhibitions and conferences for marketing Indian strength in the sector, especially in EU, Japan, Latin America etc.

— Bilateral cooperation strengthened with countries of Europe, Latin America, Japan, Australia and Asian region by entering into Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs). These MoUs have been used to provide platform for the industry to establish contacts with counterparts in these countries and to explore and increase possibilities of exports.

— Providing world class infrastructure including data communications at strategic locations in the country. Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), which provides "Single Window Services" and Data Communications services to the software exporters, has set up 28 new STPs during 1999 to 2002 and thereby bringing the total No. of STPs to 37.

These STPs offer low cost alternatives for the industry to set up operations for export of software and services.

**Shifting of telephones**

2217. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications received during the last six months by MTNL Delhi from the telephone subscribers in Meghalaya for the shifting of telephones to Delhi;

(b) the number of applications disposed of and the telephone connections given so far;

(c) whether any of these applications are still pending; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?